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American School
of Oriental Research
in Jerusalem.

A NEWLY DISCOVERED INSCRIBED MOSAIC NEAR MT. NEBO

A FEW days before the close of a twenty-five day trip to Petra, it was my privilege, in company with other members of the American School in Jerusalem, to visit Madeba and examine the famous Mosaic map. While there we made inquiries as to a newly discovered mosaic of which we had heard in Kerak. It proved to be in a house only an hour west northwest of Madeba and not far from Mt. Nebo, where we were going the next day. So we resolved if possible to find and study it. The next morning we saw on a knoll about three quarters of a mile southeast from Mt. Nebo the house which had been built by a Bedouin as a storehouse for grain. While laying the foundations he had come upon this elaborate mosaic and made use of it as a floor. The key was in the care of some Bedouin tenting near at hand, who in the hope of a liberal backsheesh allowed us to enter. The length of the building inside was 11.40 m., and its width 8.20 m. The floor was covered with an elaborate mosaic, containing figures of men and animals. One group of a man and a woman with a snake coiled on a pole between them may have been a representation of Adam and Eve. There was also a picture of a man leading a donkey, and above them various beasts.

At the top of the mosaic, just in front of the altar, was a large Greek inscription of six lines. The border was 4 cm. broad, the length inside 2.92 m., and the width inside 52 cm. The letters were 8 cm. high. We had the inscription swept and washed off, so that the letters became quite clear, and we were able to copy them. In spite of the darkness of the room and the smoothness of the floor, it was possible to photograph the right hand half of the inscription (Fig. 1); and this photograph has been very useful in corroborating readings. I had to do the work of copying and photographing as expeditiously as possible, for the natives were restless and continually demanded backsheesh. They threatened to cover the inscription with *tiben*, and insisted upon getting in

FIGURE 1.—MOSAIC INSCRIPTION

1) ☧ ЄΠΙΤΟΥΑΓΙΩ☧ΩCIΩΙΩΑΝΝΟΥЄΙΠΙC☧ЄΚΤΗCΘΗ
☧ЄΤЄΛΙΩΘΗΩΑΓΙΟCΤΩΠΩCCΟΥΔ1ι

2) ΒΑΡΙΧΑΠΡЄCΒΥΤΗΡΟΥ☧ΠΑΡΑΜΟΝΑΡΙΟΥΑΥΤΟΥЄΝ
ΜΗΝΙΝΟЄΜΒΡΙΩΧΡΟΝΟΝЄΚΤΙΝΙΝΔϛ

3) ☧ ΟΘ̄CΤΟΥΑΓΙΟΥΛΟΤ☧ΤΟΥΑΓΙΟΥΠΡΟΚΟΠΙΟΥΠΡΟCΔЄ☧Є
ΤΙΝΠΡΟCΦΟΡΑΝ☧ΤΗΝΚΑΡΠΟΦΟΡϛ

4) CΤЄΦΑΝΟΥ☧ΗΛΙΑΑΔЄΛΦΟΝΤΕΚΝΑΚΟΜΙΤΙCCΑ☧ ΟΘ̄C
ΤΟΝΑΓΙΟΝΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΝΠΡΟCΔЄ☧Є ☧

5) ΤΗΝΚΑΡΠΟΦΟΡΙΑΝCЄΡΓΙΟΥ☧ΠΡΟΚΟΠΙΟΥΤΕΚΝΟΝ
ΑΥΤΟΥ☧ΥΠЄΡCΩΤΗΡΙΑCΡΑΒΑΘΑCΑΝΑCΤΑCΙΑC

6) ☧ΥΠЄΡΑΝΑΠΑΥCЄΩCΙΩΑΝΝΟΥΑΝΑCΤΑCΙΟΥ☧ΥΠЄΡΟΝ
ΠΡΟCЄΝΙΚЄΝΚ̄C̄ΓΙΝΟCΚΙΤΩΩΝΟΜΑΤΑ

the way and shutting windows and doors when we wanted them open.

Transcription

1) ἐπὶ τοῦ ἁγιω(τάτου) κ(αὶ) ὡσιω(τάτου) Ἰωάννου εἰπισκ(όπου) ἐκτήσθη κ(αὶ) ἐτελιώθη ὡ ἅγιος τώπως σου δι[ὰ]
2) Βαριχᾶ πρεσβυτήρου κ(αὶ) παραμοναρίου αὐτοῦ, ἐν μηνὶ Νοεμβρίῳ χρόνον ἔκτιν ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος).
3) Ὁ Θ(εὸ)ς τοῦ ἁγίου Λὸτ κ(αὶ) τοῦ ἁγίου Προκοπίου, πρόσδεξε τὶν προσφορὰν κ(αὶ) τὴν καρποφορ(ίαν)
4) Στεφάνου κ(αὶ) Ἠλία ἀδελφῶν τέκνα Κομιτίσσα. Ὁ Θ(εὸ)ς τῶν ἁγίον μαρτύρον, πρόσδεξε
5) τὴν καρποφορίαν Σεργίου κ(αὶ) Προκοπίου τέκνον αὐτοῦ ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας Ῥαβαθᾶς Ἀναστασίας
6) κ(αὶ) ὑπὲρ ἀναπαύσεως Ἰωάννου Ἀναστασίου κ(αὶ) ὑπὲρ ὃν προσένικεν. Κ(ύριο)ς γινόσκι τὼ ὠνόματα.

Translation

When the most holy and saintly John was bishop, there was built and completed thy holy place by Barichas the presbyter, and his warden, in the month of November, the sixth year of the indiction. The God of the holy Lot and of the holy Procopius receive the tribute and the offering of Stephen and Elias, brothers, children of Comitissas. The God of the holy martyrs receive the offering of Sergius and Procopius, his children, for the sake of the salvation of Rabatha Anastasia, and for the repose of John Anastasius and for those who contributed (the Lord knows their names).

Commentary

At the time I copied the inscription, we were told that we were the first who had seen it, but on returning to Jerusalem, we found that a hasty and incorrect copy had been sent to Father F. M. Abel of the Dominicans; and that he, without seeing the inscription, had published it in the *Revue Biblique*, XI, 1914, pp. 112–115. Phocylides, also without having seen the inscription, has republished it from the *Revue Biblique* in the Greek journal Νέα Σιών, XIV, 1914, pp. 113–115. I publish it anew, that their mistakes may not be repeated.[1]

[1] I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness for the suggestion that the inscription should be published to Professor George L. Robinson, Ph.D.,

One serious mistake in the Dominican publication is the order of the lines. Line 3 is given first, then lines 4, 5, 6, 1, 2. That my order, which gives a much more intelligible reading of the whole inscription, is correct, may be seen from the photograph, which gives the second half of each line.

I add a few explanations of individual words and abbreviations:

Line 1. The stigma over Ϛ in ΑΓΙϚ and ϢCIϚ is a common sign of abbreviation. It also occurs at the end of lines 2 and 3, as if it were a separate letter, and several times is used to cross the right lower leg of the letter Κ to show that it is an abbreviation for *καὶ*, and in line 1 to show that *ειπισκ.* is an abbreviation. For this sign cf. Prentice, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, 1908, *passim*, especially p. 192; *A.J.A.* XII, 1908, pp. 344–348; *Am. J. Phil.* XXX, 1909, p. 205. For the interchange of *ω* and *ο* in *ὡσιω(τάτου)* cf. Mayser, *Grammatik der Griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit*, pp. 98, 99, where several examples are given; *e.g.* *ὤνομα* for *ὄνομα* and *τὼ* for *τὸ*, (cf. line 6). There are three other cases of this towards the end of line 1. On *ει* for *ε* in *ειπισκ* cf. Mayser, *op. cit.*, p. 73. The use of *η* for *ι* in *ἐκτήσθη* and of *ι* for *ει* in *ἐτελιώθη*, as in modern Greek, is too frequent to need comment (cf. Mayser, *op. cit.*, and Prentice, *op. cit.*, index, p. 350). In the reading ϹΟΥΔΙ Father Abel has inserted *π*, making ϹΠΟΥΔΙ which he interprets as *σπουδῇ*, meaning "by the diligence of"; but traces of an A make certain the reading *σου διὰ*. An analogy for this use of *σου* is found in the expression *ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριόν σου* in a quotation from Psalm 50, 21, which is inscribed near the door, published in *Rev. Bibl. l. c.* Ioannes or John is a very common name for a bishop in Syria (cf. Prentice, *op. cit.*, No. 46).

Line 2. Barichas reminds one of Aramaic Barakh and Barachos in Prentice, *op. cit.*, No. 247. In *πρεσβυτήρου* we have *η* for *ε*, which is not an uncommon variation (cf. Prentice, *op. cit.*, p. 350). *παραμονάριος* (cf. Sophocles, *Lexicon*) "the keeper of a church" or sexton, is the technical word for the official guardian

Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, 1913–14, under whose leadership the trip was conducted. Further thanks are due to Father Abel of the Dominican monastery and to Father Timothy of the Greek monastery at Jerusalem for their kindness in examining this new copy of the inscription; and to my brother, Professor David M. Robinson of Johns Hopkins University, for many suggestions.

or warden of the Church, and corresponds to the Latin *mansionarius* (cf. for example Prentice, *op. cit.*, No. 85). Father Abel has unnecessarily inserted τοῦ before αὐτοῦ, both in the original copy and in the transcription. ἔκτιν is probably used as the accusative of ἔκτος, though possibly it is for ἕκτης and refers to the sixth indiction. In Father Abel's copy the second I in INIΔ is also a mistake. INΔς was a common abbreviation for ἰνδικτιών.[1] As is well known, the "indiction" was the fiscal period of fifteen years, established by Constantine the Great, after the reorganization of the Roman empire. We know from this that the date of the inscription must be subsequent to Constantine. Its similarity to the Madeba Map in workmanship indicates an early date, probably the fourth century.

Line 3. $\overline{\Theta C}$ was an abbreviation very frequently used for θεός, (cf. Prentice, *op. cit.*, and Littmann, Magie and Stuart, *Gr. and Latin Inscriptions in Syria*, Nos. 249, 252, 1049, etc.). For ΛΟΤ Father Abel has ΛϑΤ (transcribed Λοὐτ). The naturalness of reading Λὸτ here instead of Λοὐτ is confirmed by the Λὼτ occurring in the second inscription (see below). Note τὶν for τὴν, showing the pronunciation of η as ι, as in modern Greek. καρποφορ is abbreviated for καρποφορίαν. This form is found frequently in inscriptions from Madeba and elsewhere.[2] In the first three lines the cross-line of the alpha is broken, not so in the last three lines.

Line 4. ο for ω in ἀδελφῦν, τῦν, ἁγἰον, μαρτύρον, in τέκνον in l. 5, and γινόσκι in l. 6. In τέκνα as elsewhere there is a careless use of case ending. Good Greek requires the genitive τέκνων. πρόσδεξε for πρόσδεξαι (cf. Prentice, *op. cit.*, No. 71 for example). This use of ε for αι was also frequent, as indicated in Mayser's *Grammatik* and in Prentice, *op. cit.*, p. 350. The pronunciation of the two was much the same.

Line 5. τέκνον seems to be for τέκνων. Ῥαβαθᾶς: Not to be read Ῥαβαόας as Father Abel does, but Ῥαβαθᾶς, which is known to have been a common name, the reading being confirmed by the photograph. Cf. Rehoboth in *Gen.* xxvi, 22, and the name Robatha, for which references are given in *A. J. A.* XIV, 1910, p. 60.

Line 6. On ἀναπαύσεως and the idea in the verb ἀναπαύω, which occurs in the service for the dead among the early Chris-

[1] Cf. Waddington, *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie*, p. 561; Prentice, *op. cit.*, etc.

[2] For this and other words of the inscription cf. Du Cange, *Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediae et Infimae Graecitatis;* Prentice, *op. cit.*

tians as in the Modern Greek Church, cf. *B.C.H.* 1877, pp. 321 ff.; *Rev.* xiv, 13; *Matt.* xi, 28; Prentice, *op. cit.*, Nos. 7, 170, etc. προσένικεν: This form is difficult to explain. It is possible to translate "in behalf of those for whom he made offering," or, as Sophocles' *Lexicon* says, "performed communion service." Father Abel reads προσενεγκόντων "those who brought offerings." But this requires radical changing of the Greek word, and yet the sense rather requires us to translate "those who contributed" (cf. προσφοράν 1. 3). The singular is used for the plural. The verb is frequent in such inscriptions (cf. Prentice, *op. cit.*, No. 437; Du Cange, *op. cit.*, *s. v.*). $\overline{\text{KC}}$ is a common abbreviation for Κύριος. In γινόσκι τὼ we have *o* for ω, ι for ει (Mayser, *op. cit.*, pp. 87 f.; 98 f; *A.J.A.* XVIII, 1914, p. 73) and, what seems rather unusual, ω for α, due to vowel assimilation.

The sense of the whole thus becomes fairly clear. First there is a statement of when and how the sacred place was finished. Lot and Procopius are evidently patron saints, whose God is to receive this offering of Stephen and Elias and Sergius and Procopius. This Procopius who shares the expense of the building is a different person, probably named after the patron saint Procopius mentioned in line 3. These men and others have made their offering for Rabatha Anastasia and for the repose of John Anastasius, probably a much revered man, who had recently died. The building was in all likelihood a mortuary chapel.

Besides this main inscription and the minor one near the door there is a small inscription in the southeast corner of the church, which I also copied. Its border was 2½ cm. wide, its length 74 cm., its width 20 cm., and the height of its letters 6 cm. It reads as follows:

1) ΑΓΙΕΛΩΤΠΡΟCΔЄƸЄΤΗΝ
2) ΠΡΟCЄΥΧΗΝΡΩΜΗCϛΠΟΡΦΥΡϛ
3) ϛΜΑΡΙΑCΤΩΝCΩΝΔϑΝΔΩΝ

1) Ἅγιε Λὼτ πρόσδεξε τὴν
2) προσευχὴν Ῥώμης (καὶ) Πορφυρ(ίας)
3) (καὶ) Μαρίας τῶν σῶν δούνδων

Translation : Holy Lot, receive the prayer of Rome (or Roma) and of Porphyria and of Mary, your servants.

Note especially the sign ϛ for καί, indicating different workmanship from the main inscription. This is also found in the

mosaic in the church at Bethlehem and elsewhere, cf. Prentice, *op. cit.*, No. 29, ll. 12, 14, 17; Nos. 61, 62, 71, 122, 314 (especially p. 192); Waddington, *op. cit.*, Nos. 1997, 2068d; *Am. J. Phil.* XXX, 1909, p. 205. The reading δούνδων is very strange, and can be explained only as a mistake due to the ignorance of the workman who laid the mosaic. It is evidently for δούλων. The prayer seems to be addressed to the patron saint Lot.

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